United Nations A/C.2/55/SR.19

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
14 November 2000

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 19th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 20 October 2000, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Niculescu ..... (Romania)

Contents

Agenda item 95: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*)

(b) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*)

(c) Water supply and sanitation (*continued*)

(d) Further implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (*continued*)

(f) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (*continued*)

Agenda item 94: Sustainable development and international economic cooperation (*continued*)

(d) High-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership (*continued*)

Agenda item 98: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

00-70036 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 95: Environment and sustainable development (*continued*)

(b) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/55/211)

(c) Water supply and sanitation (*continued*) (A/55/65-E/2000/19)

(d) Further implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*) (A/55/185 and A/C.2/55/3)

(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/55/331)

(f) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (*continued*) (A/55/91)

1. **Mr. Maksimychev** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation attached great importance to the implementation of the United Nations conventions on the environment, which demonstrated the contribution of the United Nations in implementing the decisions taken at Rio.

2. Turning to the specific conventions, he said that the Convention on Biological Diversity had helped individual countries to form policies in that area, and he was pleased to note that his Government was preparing to accede to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety which had been adopted in Montreal earlier in the year. Further strengthening of cooperation among that Convention and the other environmental instruments and United Nations agencies dealing with the problems of biodiversity was of the utmost importance, as those problems were cross-sectoral in nature.

3. The Russian Federation considered the Convention on desertification the fundamental international legal instrument governing the fight against desertification and soil degradation on a global scale. The forthcoming regional meeting of Parties in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, would undoubtedly provide impetus for more countries in the region to accede to the Convention. For its part, his Government was attempting to speed up the process domestically. The delay could be attributed to the structural changes which had recently taken place in national environmental bodies.

4. Implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol was among his Government's priorities for action in the environmental sphere. The early establishment of mechanisms for implementation of the Kyoto Protocol would be in the interests of all States and their sustainable economic development. The forthcoming sixth conference of the Parties should lead to a new level of international cooperation, and its success would depend on the willingness of the Parties to consider each other's interests.

5. Finally, his Government also supported the implementation of the World Solar Programme and urged increased cooperation between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Secretariat in that area.

6. **Mr. Avrahamy** (Israel) said that, as a party to the Convention on desertification Israel was deeply committed to sharing its experience with other countries. Ben-Gurion University, located in the heart of Israel's vast Negev Desert had launched an International Programme for Arid Land Crops (IPALAC) with a view to combating poverty among the inhabitants of drylands. IPALAC projects included "Dates for the Sahel", in which Israel cooperated with Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Senegal, and "Trees for Arid Lands", which sought to introduce fruit and multi-purpose trees to Africa's arid lands on a large scale. Core funding for IPALAC had been provided by UNESCO, the Government of Finland, the Government of Israel and Ben-Gurion University.

7. The Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research also located in the Negev, worked with all relevant Israeli and international organizations on programmes for Middle East, Asian, African and Latin American countries affected by desertification. The Centre studied the dryland environment, human settlements in the drylands, dryland resources management and biological production in the drylands. One of its major regional activities was an initiative to control land degradation in the Middle East with the participation of

degradation in the Middle East with the participation of various countries of the region and the World Bank. The initiative included the establishment of regional cooperation mechanisms, the exchange of technology, the application of research findings, training and the identification of investment priorities. In conclusion, his delegation believed that regional cooperation was crucial to combating desertification, and that the desire of inhabitants of drylands to form partnerships with those who were willing to share their knowledge and experience transcended national borders.

8. **Mr. Abreha** (Ethiopia) said that his delegation attached great importance to the Convention on Biological Diversity. In that connection, it welcomed the adoption of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention, based on the precautionary approach contained in principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.

9. Despite remarkable efforts to integrate the traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous and local communities in the implementation of the Convention, much remained to be done. For the developing world, particularly in Africa, indigenous and local knowledge and practices were vital to agricultural productivity, food security and environmental protection and took the ecosystem approach to conservation. Since 90 per cent of the world's biological diversity was situated in the territories of indigenous peoples and local communities, it was important to recognize those peoples' rights over their own knowledge, technology, innovations and practices, and their right to participate in decision-making processes related to them. In that connection, the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), which viewed intellectual property rights as private or individual and exclusive, must be harmonized with the Convention on Biological Diversity, which recognized the role and achievements of local and indigenous communities and established collective and community property rights.

10. The communiqué of the Group of African States issued at the 5th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Nairobi in May 2000, called for international recognition of the rights of local communities and their knowledge and technologies in order to protect them from piracy. Support must be given to the efforts of the Group of African States, the Like-minded Group and the least developed countries in the World Trade Organization (WTO) to ensure that TRIPS, particularly its article 27.3 (b) prohibited the patenting of life forms, including plants, animals, micro-organisms and biological process, and ensured protection of the innovations of indigenous and local farming communities.

11. His Government had formulated a national action programme to combat desertification, as well as policies to address the problem in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. Over 40 countries had submitted reports on the implementation of the Convention on desertification, demonstrating the importance they attached to the issue. The international community, particularly the developed countries, must do more to ensure the full implementation of the Convention. His delegation shared the views of the Conference of the Parties that contributions for combating drought and desertification must be clearly differentiated from other official development assistance. Developed countries, international financial institutions and other organizations should also make the necessary contributions to the Convention's Global Mechanism for combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought and accord the Convention a status equal to other conventions. Ways must be found to enable the Convention to benefit from the Global Environment Facility.

12. **Ms. Khan-Cummings** (Trinidad and Tobago) expressed her delegation's full support for the statements made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the representative of Samoa on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, respectively. While the programmes of the specialized agencies to implement the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States were encouraging, much remained to be done. The international community must devote priority attention to completing work on a vulnerability index for the small island developing States, as called for in General Assembly resolution 54/224 in the Millennium Declaration. As indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/55/185), the Committee for Development Policy and the Commonwealth Secretariat were not taking into account the work of regional bodies such as the Caribbean Development Bank, and vice versa, she therefore called for a coordinated and coherent approach to finalizing work on the index (A/55/185, para. 62). Her delegation was concerned at the lack of

progress on funding for more than 300 projects submitted by small island developing States to the meeting of representatives of donors, held in February 1999 and called for a more holistic approach to the financing of those projects. She expressed appreciation, however, for the efforts by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) on selected climate change projects and for the funding mechanism established by Norway, Italy, Germany and Japan.

13. Noting the importance of a comprehensive and integrated approach to sustainable development, she expressed appreciation for the assistance of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Alliance of Small Island States, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility in organizing the Second Workshop on Climate Change, Negotiations, Management and Strategy, held in Apia, Samoa, (A/C.2/55/3) and looked forward to the workshop on energy issues to be held in Cyprus in early 2001.

14. Trinidad and Tobago was determined to fulfil it commitments under the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and was accelerating efforts to integrate the environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development in its national programmes and projects. Her Government was focusing on the sustainable management of its renewable and non-renewable resources and making every effort to increase the involvement of the private sector, including non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, in its sustainable development programmes. Every company in Trinidad and Tobago was required to contribute to the Green Fund included in the national budget for 2001. Funds were being allocated to environmental non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations and other elements of civil society with a view to fostering a culture of sustainable development, and workshops and seminars were being organized to sensitize the private sector to major environmental issues.

15. **Mr. Sieber** (Observer for Switzerland) said that his delegation had played a key role in the negotiation of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, which it had signed in May during the 5th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, held in Nairobi. All necessary measures must be taken to ensure the rapid implementation — in any case not later that 2002 — of that pioneering instrument, which highlighted the precautionary principle, established linkages between environment-related and trade agreements and promoted technical and institutional capacity-building to ensure the environmental safety of biotechnology. His delegation hoped that the General Assembly would appeal to States to sign and ratify the Protocol at the earliest possible date.

16. At the meeting of the Conference of the Parties, his delegation had submitted draft voluntary guidelines on promoting access to genetic resources and the sharing of their benefits, to be examined at the meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in 2002. His delegation also supported optimal synergy among activities under various international instruments and would be making specific proposals in that regard.

17. Switzerland had contributed over SwF 4 million to finance desertification and drought activities since the entry into force of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and $59 million in bilateral assistance in the period from 1997 to 2000. His delegation welcomed the nearly universal recognition of the Convention and hoped that States parties would integrate its principles in their national policies and programmes and in the new initiatives to be outlined by the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In conclusion, he appealed for enhanced coordination of the activities of the United Nations system in the field of environment and development and greater coherence among the various environment-related forums and instruments. It was to be hoped that the establishment of an environmental management group would contribute to that end.

18. **Mr. Popov** (Belarus) said that Belarus was faithfully carrying out the provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity through its national plan and strategy was initiating the relevant national procedures preparatory to signing the Cartagena Protocol. His Government had adopted legislation on, inter alia, environmental protection, production and consumption patterns, the designation of specially protected natural areas and sites and the protection of wildlife and forests. Draft legislation on the protection of plant life was being considered. Belarus had signed the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, and intended to accede to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals. The environmental organs and scientific institutions of

Belarus were redoubling their efforts to preserve the country's biodiversity, and the size of protected areas was to be significantly increased under a national ecological programme. A national programme to protect and monitor forest resources was also being designed.

19. The most serious problem confronting Belarus was the vast area (25 per cent of its national territory) which had been subjected to radioactive pollution during the Chernobyl disaster. The impact of the disaster on flora and fauna was impossible to assess on the basis of currently available data. Belarusian scientists had identified changes in molecular and cell levels which could lead to large-scale biochemical mutations in the future and affect the development of populations and ecosystems. Additional time and resources would be needed in order to formulate specific recommendations for the preservation and use of biological resources in the affected areas.

20. Due to a shortage of financial and material resources, Belarus was having difficulty implementing its environmental programmes; a significant portion of the national budget was used to eliminate and mitigate the impact of the Chernobyl disaster. He hoped that the international community would take into account the demonstrated and sincere will of Belarus to implement the environment-related conventions and the difficulties it was grappling with as an economy in transition.

21. Belarus had participated actively in international efforts to combat land degradation. Although its territory was located in a sufficiently humid zone, drought-related land degradation and adverse changes in its landscape loomed as a genuine threat, owing to global climate changes in recent decades and anthropogenic factors such as the destruction of land and the natural vegetation cover, water depletion and urbanization. The rational use and monitoring of land exposed to desertification and degradation would be vital to the country's economic, social and ecological development. Belarus was drafting a national programme of action in that area.

22. Belarus was contemplating acceding to the Convention on desertification, pending the adoption of annex V. It had already established sound working relations with the secretariat of the Convention, to which it had submitted proposals on national requirements in that sphere. In the meantime, its work would be firmly guided by the spirit and principles of that instrument.

23. **Ms. Von Lilien-Waldau** (International Fund for Agricultural Development), speaking on behalf of the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism of the Convention to Combat Desertification, said that the Global Mechanism could best be described as a partnership builder or interface between resource needs and resources available. The problem of land degradation and desertification was closely linked to the development process itself, in particular, rural and agricultural development, poverty eradication and sustainable development as a whole.

24. In order to address land degradation issues properly, Government technical ministries in such areas as agriculture, livestock, water and rural development must be involved. Because the financing and implementation of the Convention was linked to more efficient and effective use of existing financial mechanisms, it was also absolutely necessary to involve ministries of planning and finance in the process at an early stage to facilitate mainstreaming of Convention objectives into the regular planning and budgetary processes. One of the main tasks of the Global Mechanism, therefore, was to contribute to the mainstreaming of the Convention.

25. Practical experience had shown that the interventions of the Global Mechanism had a multiplier effect, whereby its resources served as a catalyst to mobilize other grants and funding. As to the resources available to the Global Mechanism it had received contributions from IFAD, the World Bank and the Governments of Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark and Japan. The Conference of the Parties had also requested the Global Mechanism, in cooperation with the Secretariat, to organize five regional and subregional workshops on resource mobilization.

26. Among initiatives of the Global Mechanism in support of the implementation of the Convention was the Niger/Nigeria shared water programme, in cooperation with UNEP, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the concerned Governments. A joint project of Mali, Tunisia and China was another example of the "matchmaking" which the Mechanism facilitated.

27. **Mr. Hamad** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that, in the context of the ongoing reform process, UNESCO was refocusing its activities into five high-priority fields, one of which was water resource research. The critical situation of freshwater had increasingly imposed itself as a key international concern. Worldwide action would be needed to avert the impending crisis, and the Commission on Sustainable Development had requested the United Nations system to establish a regular assessment of the world water situation.

28. Accordingly, the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had launched a programme on freshwater resources assessment leading to a biennial world water development report, and UNESCO had volunteered to host the secretariat for the programme. It would be funded with assistance from extra-budgetary resources and trust funds and run as a system-wide initiative under the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources.

29. One area demanding immediate action was freshwater resources education. Therefore, the Director-General had begun a project with the Government of the Netherlands to create a global UNESCO institute for water education in Delft as a centre of excellence in water resources education.

30. The Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP) established in 1975 was the pillar for UNESCO's role in the field of water resources. Central to its mandate was the building of national capacity to assess, monitor and manage freshwater resources. IHP was planning the sixth phase of its programme (2002-2007) around the theme "Water Interactions: Systems at Risk and Social Challenges".

31. **Mr. Yauvoli** (Fiji) welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/55/185). Sustainable development called for resources to be directed where they were most needed, so that current development needs did not compromise those of future generations. That was difficult in his country's situation, however, as resources were scarce, and the development process would ultimately result in a legacy of depleted resources and debt to future generations. The situation was compounded by Fiji's isolation, narrow export base and vulnerability to shocks such as drought or cyclones.

32. His delegation acknowledged the concerted efforts to advance the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. One issue worth stressing was the vulnerability index proposed in General Assembly resolution 54/224. Work on that index should be completed as soon as possible, in order to reflect fully the plight of small island developing States. Until it was completed, individual small island developing States such as Maldives, Samoa and Vanuatu should continue to be regarded as least developed countries.

33. **Mr. Jokonya** (Zimbabwe) said that the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 had been better integrated into efforts towards sustainable development, as an increasing role for renewable energy was considered important for the future. In developing countries, however, transfer of technology and capacity-building were needed to achieve that objective, as realizing the enormous potential of renewable energy technologies required significant research and development and long-term market expansion.

34. More efforts were needed to support the wider use of solar energy in rural areas. Experience with solar home systems in Zimbabwe had been very encouraging, and local communities should be supported financially to enable them to participate in such projects. In the view of his delegation, the technology transfer component of the Global Environment Facility should be strengthened. UNEP was introducing a programme that would aid in the creation of small private sector energy companies in Africa based on renewable energy technologies, and UNESCO efforts in renewable energy training were highly appreciated.

35. The 75 per cent of humanity living in developing countries accounted for only 25 per cent of global energy consumption. More than a billion people had no sources of energy available to them other than the traditional fuel wood and other forms of biomass. The cornerstone of the policy to promote renewable energy was conservation of finite fossil fuel resources and exploitation of abundant natural, non-depletable solar, wind and biomass resources. Such a path was environmentally benign, allowed equitable use of resources and was sustainable.

36. **Mr. Zvachula** (Micronesia) said that all countries must approach the crucial problems of the environment with a far greater degree of commitment to timely progress than currently existed. Appeals for a new commitment and for political will had been made for years but rarely heeded.

37. Preservation of the ocean and of marine biological diversity was critical, particularly for the people of Micronesia. Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action remained the basic guidelines for protecting the environment and achieving sustainable development.

38. His Government was committed to the achievement of a successful outcome to the next session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The "clean development" mechanism promised to be a useful tool in enabling island countries to play their part in combating climate change and to adapt to its consequences according to their own national circumstances. The Kyoto Protocol should come into force at the earliest possible date, and all countries should be encouraged to sign and ratify it. It was tragic that prevention alone was no longer sufficient and that countries were now having to adapt to climate change while those responsible for it would be the ones least affected by it.

39. **Mr. Zayts** (Ukraine) asserted that the eight years since the Rio Conference had clearly shown that acquiring the instruments of sustainable development outlined in Agenda 21 was complex from the scientific and methodological standpoint as well as the practical. The forthcoming 10-year review process should not only concentrate on assessing implementation of the decisions made in Rio but also focus attention on identifying ways of implementing Agenda 21 more effectively in the light of current developments in globalization and information technology.

40. Ukraine was completing the process of formulating a State policy for the protection of the environment and the rational use of natural resources based on the concept of sustainable development, and very much appreciated the scientific and technical, as well as financial, assistance of the international community, notably the Global Environment Fund.

41. The consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station had been planetary in scale, so Ukraine was well aware of the dangers entailed in the irrational use of natural resources in new technologies. His country had been grateful for the invaluable assistance of the international community in overcoming the consequences of the accident and turning the power station into an environmentally safe system. The decision had been taken to close it on 15 December 2000, and Ukraine would be submitting a draft resolution to declare that day an International Day to Combat Technogenetic Disasters.

42. Ukraine called on the countries of Europe to make every effort to ensure that the Fifth Ministerial Conference on the "environment for Europe" process, to be held in Kiev, helped to consolidate the pan-European environment process and made a substantial contribution to the development of an environmental strategy for the region. The Conference should concentrate on the state of the environment in Europe and the linkages between the environment, transport and health, water supply problems, energy and resource savings, and the preservation of biological and landscape diversity. It was important for the Conference to discuss ways of improving the mechanisms for implementing existing conventions, and it should consider questions of drafting and adopting new treaty instruments to strengthen subregional cooperation, such as the Carpathian Convention.

43. Ukraine attached great significance to securing biological diversity and halting soil degradation. A national programme had been drawn up to create a network of environmental corridors, which would become an important element in the pan-European system. Agricultural reforms would enable more money to be spent in the coming years on restoring degraded soils.

44. **Ms. Bose** (India) said that in January 2000 her country had adopted a national policy and action strategy on biological diversity after consultation with all stakeholders with the aim of providing a framework for preparing detailed action programmes at the micro-level on the sustainable use of biological diversity. In the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity, India believed that one of the issues that needed to be addressed urgently related to the development of proprietary patents based on traditional knowledge of indigenous communities without obtaining the prior informed consent of the developing countries concerned and without coming to any agreement on benefit-sharing with them. There was a clear and

pressing need to extend effective protection to knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous communities, developed over millennia, in order to ensure that benefits flowed back from patentees to original developers. India was in the process of completing its domestic procedures for signing the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

45. India attached great importance to the Convention on desertification in Africa, but was concerned about the financial constraints hampering its effective implementation and called upon the international community to make the requisite financial resources available.

46. It was estimated that, at the present rate of consumption, the world would run out of conventional sources of energy well before the end of the millennium. India had initiated research and development with a view to harnessing new and renewable sources of energy and had achieved significant progress through national programmes in a number of energy sectors. Public awareness regarding the benefits of renewable energy had been consciously promoted. By December 1999 renewable energy represented a little over 1.5 per cent of India's total installed generating capacity, and it was hoped that by 2012 nearly 10 per cent of that capacity would be based on renewable sources.

47. As a country with a long coastline and more than 5,000 islands, India attached the highest importance to implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and to the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly. Its approach to the sustainable development of its small islands had involved programmes for the maintenance, regeneration and restoration of the ecosystem, with the objective of restoring productive potential, providing employment to local communities and maintaining and promoting ecological balance. It had found that decentralization and full involvement by local communities was the most effective way of sustaining that process and had decided to devote a substantial part of its technical cooperation programmes to small island developing States, which had special problems and needs.

48. **Mr. Balarezo** (Peru) said that the 10-year review process should not renegotiate commitments which had already been made with great difficulty; it should rather be the occasion to give a new political impetus to the process, critically analysing the reasons why the objectives of Agenda 21 had not been fully met and complementing it with new modalities that would strengthen international cooperation. The fact that the social, economic, environmental and cultural dimensions of sustainable development were still far from having been resolved was due largely to the inadequacy of international financial resources and of the transfer of clean and appropriate technologies.

49. It was a matter of urgency that action and decisions be taken that would make it possible rapidly to implement the Kyoto Protocol and the "clean development" mechanism, taking account of the importance of technology transfer and international efforts that gave priority to reduction of greenhouse gases. It was also important to design new financial mechanisms and increase the resources of the Global Environment Fund.

50. Peru considered that the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was a fundamental instrument. It also welcomed the recent decision by the Economic and Social Council to create the United Nations Forum on Forests with universal participation, and hoped to work seriously and constructively on its programme of work in order to resolve certain outstanding matters including equitable access to markets and elimination of technical barriers to trade.

51. Adequate safe water supply, sanitation and the treatment of solid and liquid wastes were areas of growing concern because of the depletion of sources, rapid urbanization and the effects on the environment, health and economic competitiveness of the country. Peru considered that those areas of concern should be an important part of future discussions, and that it was important to use methodologies employing result indicators based on water quality. The United Nations system could prioritize programmes and projects that would help countries comply with objectives in those areas.

52. **Ms. Girtel** (Canada) said that the Economic and Social Council had recently taken a crucial decision in establishing the United Nations Forum on Forests. Throughout the deliberations leading up to that decision there had been agreement that the Forum should focus on facilitating and promoting implementation of the proposals of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests and those of its predecessor, the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests.

Canada believed that national progress reports on implementing those proposals were fundamental to the Forum's success. More important for the longer term would be working out the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework and devising approaches for appropriate financial and technology transfer support for sustainable forest management. Canada believed that a strong, legally binding agreement on forests was the best way to create and channel the necessary political will.

53. Canada also attached great importance to achieving a strong and effective convention on persistent organic pollutants, to which the key would be financing. But it had already announced that it was establishing a trust fund at the World Bank to help developing countries and countries with economies in transition with capacity-building needed to implement commitments under such a convention, and hoped that other developed countries could make similar announcements.

54. Canada was committed to early action on climate change and had recently announced an action plan on the subject. The forthcoming 6th meeting of the Conference of the Parties would be critical. It also attached particular importance to the protection of the marine environment, and welcomed the results of the 1st meeting of the United Nations open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

55. Canada considered that it was important and urgent to draw up viable options to strengthen world environmental governance, with particular emphasis on coherence between institutions, effective conformity mechanisms for the agreements, coordination of the activities of Conventions and capacity-building to facilitate their implementation.

56. **Mr. Koech** (Kenya) said that the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 should result in greater political commitment for better management of global biological resources. Kenya had a rich diversity of indigenous knowledge and associated traditional systems, with great potential for contributing to the sustainable utilization and conservation of biodiversity. Its immediate development problem was the need to reduce poverty, habitat destruction, unregulated exploitation of biological resources and pollution.

57. Substantial investments were required to address those challenges, and stakeholder groups from all sectors of society should be involved in drawing up plans and finding funds for their implementation. His delegation requested the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to assist developing countries to enhance their national capacities in biotechnology in priority areas.

58. The African continent was one of two regions in the world facing serious water shortages. In order to fight disease, which had been identified as one of the three main obstacles to Kenya's development, the Government had instituted water supply and sanitation programmes in various parts of the country. The National Water Master Plan, launched in 1974, aimed to ensure potable water supplies for all households by the year 2000. Unfortunately progress had been minimal because of economic difficulties and erratic weather conditions.

59. The Convention on desertification had benefited the least from multilateral financing and was not in the financing portfolio of the Global Environment Facility. The problem of desertification in the African continent needed urgent attention from the international community. Funding was needed from the Global Environment Fund, without it being tied to the traditional thematic areas funded by the Global Environment Facility. Accordingly, he welcomed the statement of support for that Convention made on the previous day by the representative of the United States.

60. Kenya associated itself with the Abuja Declaration of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) on that issue, and thanked UNEP for its efforts.

61. Turning to the issue of new and renewable sources of energy, he said that his Government had supported the development of renewable sources of energy, by waiving import duties and value-added tax on wind, diesel and solar-powered generation. Solar energy was becoming a popular alternative source of energy, especially in the rural areas. The Government had begun to develop standards on renewable energy products, systems and technologies. Renewable energy was expected to become mainstream, once the legal and institutional frameworks were in place.

62. In conclusion, he commended the GEF for assisting Kenya with its photovoltaic initiative; further support in that area would be welcomed.

63. **Mr. Kumalo** (South Africa) said that one of the important principles contained in the Rio Declaration was the need to eradicate extreme poverty in order to achieve sustainable development. However, unless there was greater political will and a higher level of funding devoted to the achievement of that goal, sustainable development would remain a dream for many developing countries. He therefore called for greater cooperation and partnerships between the North and the South, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

64. The Convention on desertification was of major importance to his country and to the African continent as a whole. Almost half of South Africa was threatened by desertification, and recurrent droughts were a permanent fact of life. Governments, in particular developed country partners, must fulfil their voluntary contributions to the Global Mechanism. At the same time the recent devastating floods in southern Africa, particularly Mozambique, was a reminder of how vulnerable the African continent was to climate change. He therefore called on the parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change to finalize the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the outstanding elements of the Kyoto Protocol.

65. South Africa was an active member of the World Solar Commission. The national White Paper on Energy Policy supported the development of renewable energy technologies and promoted them in accordance with the World Solar Programme.

66. His delegation was concerned at the increasing and irreversible loss of genes, species and ecosystems across the globe. Species extinction had profound implications for economic and social development, as nearly half of the world's economy, and 80 per cent of the needs of the poor were derived from biological resources. South Africa was the third most biologically diverse country in the world, and was actively involved in all the activities relating to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

67. His delegation welcomed the initiatives for the future implementation of the Programme of Action for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States. Those initiatives would require substantial financial resources, the political will of Governments and the support of the relevant multilateral institutions.

68. South Africa shared the commitment of other nations to undertake legal, regulatory and institutional reforms for the effective management of water resources. A clear policy framework for water supply and sanitation as part of a broader integrated land and water resource management strategy remained a high priority.

69. He welcomed the decision to turn the tenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development into an open-ended preparatory committee for the 10-year review process. The 2002 event should reactivate the international community's support for sustainable development and sustained economic growth and confirm the priorities and emerging issues to be focused on during the next 10-year programme; the letter should be focused, implementable, measurable and achievable within that time-frame.

70. **Ms. Bai Yongjie** (China) said that although the Convention on Biological Diversity had been in effect for some time, biological diversity in the world was still being destroyed by human activities at unprecedented rates. The adoption of the Protocol on Biosafety had been a significant achievement, and Parties to the Convention should sign and ratify it as soon as possible. The developed countries and the relevant international organizations should support and assist the developing countries in their efforts to implement the Protocol. Her Government had done a great deal of work relating to the protection of biodiversity. It had formally signed the Protocol a few months previously, and was working on regulations on biological safety.

71. Effective implementation would be the key to the success of the Convention on desertification. It was only through increased efforts by the international community, particularly by addressing the issue of financial resources and technology transfer, that the situation could be improved. Domestic ratification processes should be accelerated so that the Convention would obtain a greater degree of universality and financial backing. The Global Mechanism established by the Convention should begin its substantive operations as early as possible

72. At present, over a billion people in the world did not have a safe water supply. Governments should formulate water supply and sanitation development goals and strategies in the light of their countries'

specific circumstances and grant them priority status in their overall development strategies. The international community should provide more assistance, focusing on assisting developing countries to construct and develop water supply and sewage treatment and recycling facilities, as well as developing their human resources and capacities for planning and management.

73. Her delegation appreciated the efforts being made by the United Nations to achieve the goal of universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, and welcomed the strengthened inter-agency coordination with a view to promoting the sustainable management of fresh water. China supported the launching of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, as well as the proposal to proclaim 2003 the International Year of Freshwater.

74. The conflict between the need to produce energy and the need to protect the environment was becoming more acute. The relationship between development, energy and environment had become an important global issue. His delegation was happy to see that various specialized agencies were making great efforts to help the developing countries develop new and renewable energies. The World Solar Programme 1996-2005 had met with positive responses and had been implemented in a number of regions and countries.

75. At present, the lack of financial resources and technology was hampering the efforts of developing countries to develop new and renewable energy. The international community, especially the developed countries, should provide financial assistance, an exchange of experience and the transfer of technologies for that purpose. The United Nations should promote the establishment of an effective mechanism for international cooperation and step up its assistance to promote new and renewable energy in developing countries.

76. **Ms. Georgieva** (World Bank) said that the World Bank was preparing to launch a new strategy on the environment. The challenges were clear, and the environmental threats were unprecedented: an increase in the global population of two billion over the next quarter of a century; scarcity of water; degradation of agricultural land; deforestation; overexploitation of marine fisheries; and the threat of annihilation of small island nations by rising sea levels due to climate change.

77. Looking ahead to the next few decades, there was reason to worry, but also reason to hope. Global public awareness of environmental issues was growing, knowledge was increasing and a new working partnership involving government, business and civil society was emerging for the promotion of sustainable development. The World Bank recognized the need to take a fresh look at sustainable development in a rapidly changing and globally interdependent world. A new environmental strategy was being prepared in order to better align work on environmental issues with its central mission of poverty alleviation. The new environment strategy recognized the close links between sustainable development, the environment and poverty reduction, and would focus on improving people's health, enhancing poor people's livelihoods and reducing vulnerability to environmental risks. It built on the experiences gained over the past decade.

78. While the World Bank's environmental work dealt with issues at a national level, it also promoted international environmental policy dialogue on global issues, helped raise awareness and build consensus.

79. There had been two new initiatives to protect the global environment. The Prototype Carbon Fund was the world's first market-based mechanism to address climate change and promote the transfer of finance and climate-friendly technology to developing countries. The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund was a partnership between the Bank, Conservation International and GEF which aimed to better safeguard the threatened biodiversity hotspots in developing countries.

80. The Bank had lent four billion dollars for forestry and forest-related projects since 1991. It was also one of the largest financiers of activities tackling desertification and land degradation, with a total dryland investment portfolio of 18 billion dollars for the period 1990-1998. It also provided between two billion and three billion dollars each year for investments in water in developing countries. Over the past decade it had been involved in more than 20 full-sized renewable energy projects.

81. Since the Rio Conference, new environmental policies and institutions were in place in many countries and the international community was better equipped to assess and address environmental constraints. However, aggressive action was needed to turn concepts and plans into reality. Basic assumptions